

Name: Ms. Khalsa Hamed Al Aghbari

Academic Affiliation: PhD candidate at the University of Florida

Address: 2901 SW13th Street
Gainesville, FL 32608

Telephone: (352) 846 5100

Email: aghbari222@hotmail.com

Plurality in Jebbāli

Jebbāli, a Semitic language and one of the Modern South Arabian languages¹, exhibits enormous diversity in the shapes and nature of plural formation. Quite a large array of morphological mechanisms accompanied with internal phonological alternations indicates plurality in the language. For example, noun plurals in Jebbāli are formed by diverse non-concatenative operations such as suffixation, *Vb* infixation, reduplication, mapping singular forms onto diverse plural templates and ablaut. Parallel with these morphological processes, plural forms undergo phonological alternations like vowel deletion, vowel insertion, metathesis, assimilation and re-syllabification.

This diversity in plural formation can sometimes be systematic; the resultant plural shapes straightforwardly relate to the particular shapes of their singular forms. Other plural forms can hardly be related to their singulars. To illustrate, bi-consonantal singulars, for example, may take various shapes of plural (reduplication, suffixation and mapping onto templates). Furthermore, many singular forms take simultaneously two to three plural markers to mark plurality.

This paper introduces Jebbāli through the exploration of the phonological and morphological tendencies characterizing its diverse plural patterns and mechanisms. Below, I show examples of plural forms in Jebbāli.

[1] Examples of Plural Patterns in Jebbāli

Suffixation

Sing.	Pl.	Gloss
s ^ʕ aħan	əs ^ʕ ħenti	plates
məħ	mħot	waters (a lot of water)

Doubly and Triply Marked Plurals

mifħəl	mifħabluntə	chameleons
k'ar	k'abrīn	graves
difdef-t	difdajontə/ difduj	traditional males' outfits

Vb infixation

mīr'ūn	mīrəbətən	the top parts of legs
mīgnam	mīgəbnəm	mattresses made of leather

Reduplication

kətb	ktəb	books
dik	dkək	roosters
kot	ktət	towers

Ablaut

ʔətīm	ʔitəm	orphans (m.)
s ^ʕ afriṛ	s ^ʕ əfrər	flowers

¹ Other Modern South Arabian languages include Mehri, Ħarsusi, Baḥari, Hobbyot and Socotri. They belong to the Eastern branch of Semitic. Jebbāli is widely spoken in the mountains and coastal plains of Dhofar (Ḍufār, in Arabic), the southern region of the Sultanate of Oman.